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Charivaria

WE gather from M. DALADIER's recent statement that the trouble with secret sessions of Parliament is that the secret gets hushed about from place to place.

It has been suggested that the life of GEORGE ARLISS should be filmed. We can visualise CHARLES LAUGHTON in the title rôle.

Party-Leader HESS is said to do crochet-work in his spare time. Dr. GOEBBELS of course goes in for embroidery.

In his latest fight, JOE LOUIS's opponent kissed him after they had fought for the full fifteen rounds. HITLER mustn't regard this as a precedent.



"Non-Combine Wallpaper . . ."
Advertisement.

You know the kind. It doesn't go with anything.

"HITLER MASSING TROOPS ON THE BALTIC"

Heading in "Evening Standard." Tell that to the Marines!

We see it stated that Field-Marshal GOERING plays the piccolo. We always thought he had some wild streak in him somewhere.

Colonies of penguins, a naturalist informs us, have very strict social rules. For instance, evening-dress is not optional.



A traveller says that in Fiji he was dozing under a palm when a coconut fell on his head, stunning him. This never happened to Sir ISAAC NEWTON.

Some ancient three-pronged instruments believed by experts to be over six thousand years old have been excavated in South Africa. Can these be the forks before which fingers were made?

A soldier who arrived in London from a camp somewhere in England told a reporter that he was not going to any cinemas, theatres or concerts—all he wanted was a quiet time. Apparently he had been over-entertained.

A novelist declares it is becoming increasingly difficult to live within one's income. Meanwhile the CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER seems determined to discover whether one can live without it.

Members of the Canadian Force in this country have been playing a lot of ice-hockey. The idea is that they shall get accustomed to real war conditions before going to France.



A sports-writer reminds us that the recent frost stopped hunting. But not until it had actually found those water-pipes of ours.

A County Court judge has remarked that even cinema managers have their ups and downs. Not so many as cinema organists.

An animal-lover says that owing to the black-out people are not taking out their dogs. It should be remembered, however, that this is no excuse for not taking out the licence.



"Now I propose we send him to a place like St. Helena."

Public Works

"It seems," said Farmer Adams gravely, "that that there war's warming up a bit. Shouldn't be surprised if we had a bit o' bother soon."

We are not easily driven to panic in Queen's Bishop, but after Harry Prune of the "Black Sheep" had moved his wireless into the bar and allowed us all to listen to the nine o'clock News we were inclined to agree with Farmer Adams.

"For all we know," said Naomi Prune, "they might be over here next."

"Not until they've been to London," observed Mr. Plumberry, who is a warden and is generally believed to enjoy the Government's full confidence.

"Ah!" exclaimed Farmer Adams, "Germans know as well as we do there's nothing left in London now. For all we know, headquarters of Bank of England might be here instead. Suppose they drops bombs on us just in case, like?"

"And don't forget we've got two dozen refugees," said Harry Prune, "and the office of that dog-biscuit factory. They might happen want to blow that up."

"And if they do," Naomi demanded, "what protection have we got?"

Naomi is a pretty girl, and numerous volunteers assured her that she would not be left defenceless, but it was Farmer Adams's suggestion which made local history.

"What we want," he said, "is a trench. If Parish Council helps me to dig it I'll give 'em—absolutely free of charge—a bit of land at far side of Vicarage Field. Could anything be fairer than that now?"

We all agreed that it couldn't and that it was quite probable that this generous gesture might one day save all our lives. And so Farmer Adams and Harry Prune and Mr. Plumberry, who all happened to be members of the Parish Council, agreed on the spot to

call an emergency meeting and bring the matter up.

After that Colonel Fairytrop got to hear of it and congratulated Farmer Adams with the greatest ostentation after morning service the following Sunday. "Of course, as an old soldier, Adams," he said, "I'll be delighted to superintend the making of the trench. Better than having these amateurs on the job, eh? I'll start as soon as you've got the men together."

No one of course could refuse this offer, though some people felt that a Colonel of Cavalry who had been retired, with considerable foresight on someone's part, in August, 1914, was not necessarily an infallible expert on trench-digging. And if Farmer Adams and Colonel Fairytrop were so willing to offer us protection for nothing, said Harry Prune, wasn't it only right that we should all help to dig the trenches for nothing too?

Nor, it seemed, could we gracefully

get out of that. We all went down whenever we could to the Vicarage Field and dug. Farmer Adams had chosen a pleasant corner for us, and on fine days the womenfolk came down as well to watch and encourage us. It was a happy example of what we will all do in a common cause, and there was no doubt that we made a good job of it. Colonel Fairytrop said it was the finest trench he had ever seen, which, all things considered, was probably true.

Anyway, we were proud of it, and even after it was finished we used to sneak down surreptitiously to see what we had done. The photographer from the local paper came down to take a picture of it and another picture of Farmer Adams, and there was a long paragraph in *The Queen's Bishop Jottings* about the generosity and warm-hearted patriotism of the man who had so freely given away his land for the good of his fellow-men.

That of course was before the weather broke and it began to rain hard. It poured for two days quite steadily, and when there was a fine interval I slipped down to the Vicarage Field to see how the trench was standing the rain.

It would be truer to say that it was standing *in* the rain—four feet deep in it and steadily filling up. Farmer Adams was there looking at it too.

"Pity about the trench," I said, for I felt that the poor man would naturally be heart-broken to see his generous gesture so sadly wasted.

But somehow or other he didn't look at all heart-broken. In fact he nearly looked pleased. "Aye," he agreed, "it's a pity about the trench. But it's a funny thing, you know," he said, nodding at the water, "but digging that there trench has drained this field properly for the first time since I've had it."

One hesitates of course to suggest that Farmer Adams rather suspected this all along. And even if we haven't got a trench in Queen's Bishop, there aren't many villages of our size that have such a fine open-air swimming-pool.

HOW TO
WIN THE
WAR

—EXCLUSIVE

News-magazine Poster.

Exclude us in.

My Motor is a Little House

MY motor is a little house,
Compact and warm and snug,
Wherein I live, a muffled
mouse,
Enfolded in a rug.

I have a book on George the First,
Some sandwiches for lunch,
A tangerine to quench my thirst,
The Bystander and *Punch*.

The wireless plays me melodies,
Low, haunting, sweet and sad,
"The Londonderry Air" and "Trees."
I also have a pad

On which to write to absent friends,
Or scribble foolish rhymes.
My intellectual life depends
On crosswords in *The Times*.

A semi-knitted pair of socks
Is on the seat behind;
There also is a coloured box
Of comfits crystallined.

Through windows I have carefully
sealed
I watch the weary throng
With noses red and limbs congealed
Pricking their way along.

I sit alone for hours and hours
Contented as can be,
Waiting to drive our Lady Bowers
To Boon Street, Battersea.

I eat and read and think and knit,
And when the shadows creep
I fold my woolly hands a bit
And hum myself to sleep. V.G.



War Notes

ONE advantage of all this spate of books entitled *How I Brushed the Leader's Boots, I Was a Bell-hop at Berchtesgaden, The Fuehrer Loved My Auntie Emmeline*, and so on for ever and for evermore is that one can take one's Hitler fried, grilled, roasted or *à la bonne femme*, as a cunning and bloodthirsty autocrat, as a screeching demagogue, as a statesman, as a gangster, as an epileptic half-wit, or cooked in any mode one may happen to prefer. I think I like him best *à la nouveau riche*, or *parvenu*, as the poor lad from the provinces who has "made good" and is determined to surround himself with every circumstance of pomp and luxury. It is the Arnold Bennett angle on the disturber of European peace. According to this kind of recipe, "over the fireplace . . . is a gigantic bronze map of Germany and Central Europe. The frontiers of the Third Reich are traced out by a narrow line of amber from the shores of East Prussia."

"Many walls are covered with rare Gobelin tapestries . . . if they were offered for sale in America they would fetch at least £1,000,000." He has a suite of rooms called "Chambers of the Stars," and in the main room the ceiling is made of dark blue glass on which "the movements of the planets and constellations are shown." Designs of the Zodiac form the patterns on the walls. In another of these rooms "the only illumination comes from a brazier which burns night and day." The cook at Berchtesgaden is a former head chef of the Adlon Hotel in Berlin, and the Leader dines off solid silver, principally, it appears, on vegetable soup, trout, cream buns, enormous quantities of coffee, and bowls of assorted nuts—which would make a dyspeptic, I should imagine, out of a fairly hungry cassowary. To a favourite film star he gave a diamond bracelet, a mink coat, a villa, two motor-cars, three horses and a four-seater cabin plane.

On the other hand his pockets are always "bulging with papers and packets of toffee," his suits don't fit him, and "his trousers are baggy at the knees."

* * *

Editors are always liable to make little slips, and I therefore offer my sincere sympathy to *The Practitioner*, a good solid authoritative professional magazine which stated on page 207 of its February issue:

"LOCAL ANALGESIA"

Two simple formulæ for the local relief of pain are given in the *Australian Pharmaceutical Notes and News*, November, 1939, 18, 378:

Caustic soda	2 lb.
Whiting	3 lb.
Flour	12 ounces
Water	1 gallon

An alternative formula is:

Strong solution of ammonia . . .	60 c.cm.
Liquid paraffin	120 c.cm.
Soft soap	375 gm.
Soda ash	500 gm.
Lime water	2000 c.cm."

Subsequently, however, in the interests of pedantic accuracy it was found necessary to send a little circular note to all subscribers:

"IMPORTANT CORRECTION."

'Local Analgesia.'

Under this heading on page 207 of the February issue of *The Practitioner* was printed a short contribution with two prescriptions. It now appears that the recommended solutions were for 'removal of paint' and not 'relief of pain . . .'"

The effect of this slap in the face on the editor of the *Australian Pharmaceutical Notes and News* is not yet known. But probably the Anzacs are too tough to care.

* * *

I have received the following rather sad little letter from a *poulu*:

"GENTLEMEN,—I being incorporated in the french army and I being study the English language, it is very difficult by me for cannont to hold not one review from to make the exercises of translation into of the french.

"I write you this letter beging them, you send me some one review of advancement date with watches of the winter where it fall the snow or ring and mean days the way are impenetrable.

"Thank you, I am with respect,

Gentlemen

Your obt. humble servant

— — — — —"

Can any reader help me at all? Or help him?

* * *

The annoying thing about the extreme Communist is that he takes advantage of free speech in order to support a State that forbids it: like a man drinking beer in a public house and preaching teetotalism. Which leads me to say:

I have a hundred straws to comb
Out of the hair of D. N. Pritt,
If Moscow is his mental home
Why doesn't he go back to it?

* * *

In addition to the admirable posters executed by "FOUGASSE," warning us not to speak of military matters in public places, would it not be possible for the Ministry of Information to send out a number of vacuous-looking people with instructions to whisper *faked* secrets in railway-carriages, night-clubs, restaurants and drawing-rooms, taking particular care that enemy agents *should* overhear their remarks?

* * *

I notice in this connection (under the newspaper heading "GAMELIN THE SILENT") that a member of the French Military Mission has said of the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces in France: "He has no conversation. I lunched with him on one occasion and I never heard a word from him."

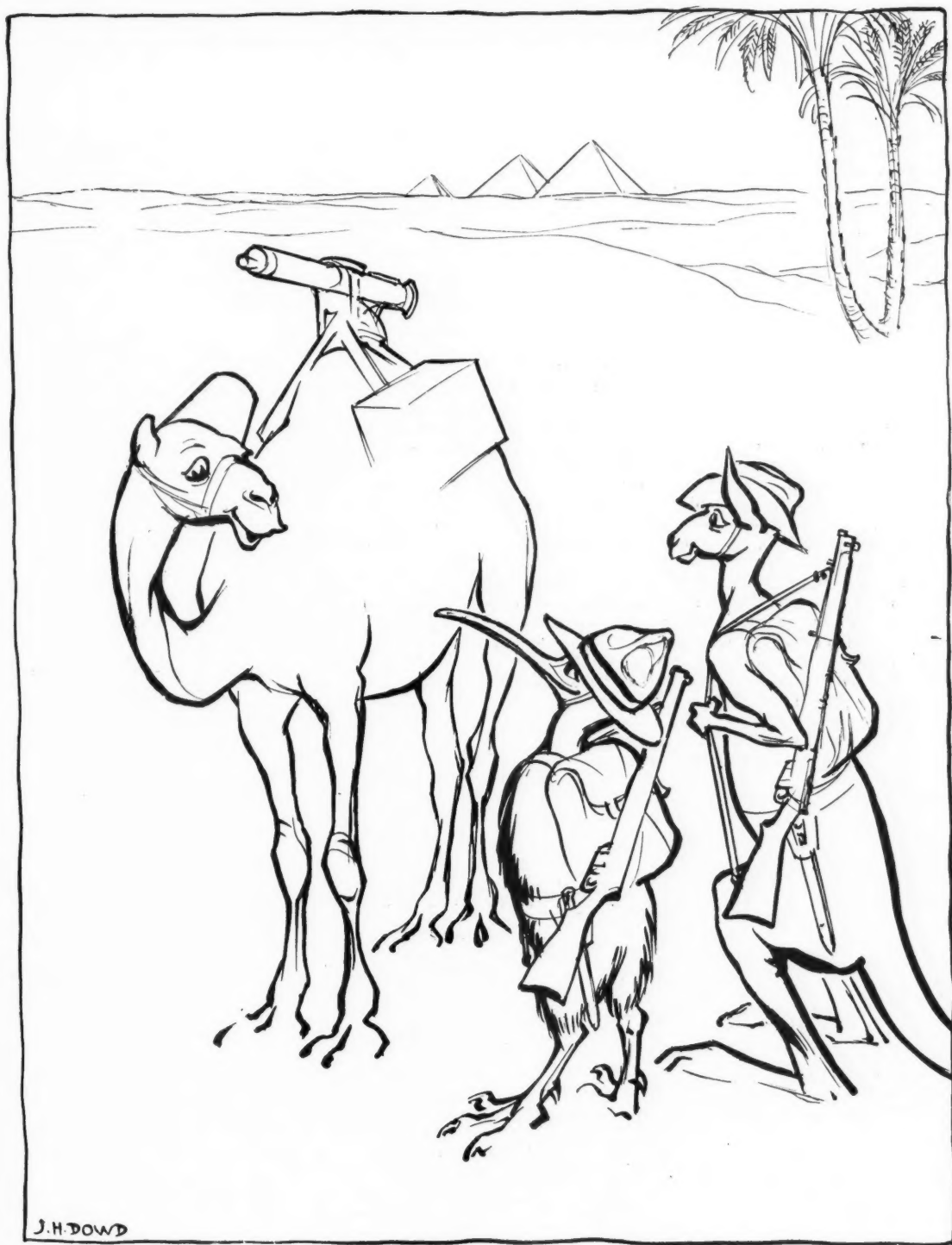
You ought to read his War Communiqués to catch him off his guard.

* * *

"Second Crop of Mushrooms—A second crop of mushrooms has appeared in the hands of Mr. Doyle, Globe House, St. Mullins. The previous crop appeared in August."—*Irish Paper*.

Since then he'd been lulled into a sense of false security.

EVOE.



THE MYSTERIOUS EAST

"Hullo! You two fellows here again?"



"Two thicknesses of tissue-paper, please."

Refresher Courses

Civil Defence

SO you have passed in Gas?
Oh, yes. I did twelve lectures.
 How long ago?
What? Oh, well, about twelve months.
 Right! What is ethyl-iodoacetate?
How much?
 Ethyl-iodoacetate.
Ethyl-iodo— Gosh! I remember the name. Ethyl— But look here, old boy, we were told not to bother about the long names. They all had short names as well—C.A.P., B.B.C., and so on.
 Very well. What is C.A.P.?
C.A.P. Half a minute—
 Or B.B.C.?
B.B.C.? B.B.C.? Oh, yes, of course.
B.B.C.? Why, that was one of the Arsenical Smokes, wasn't it?
 No.
 Oh.

B.B.C.—or Bromo-benzyl-cyanide—is a lachrymator or tear-gas, a brown oily liquid with a very penetrating smell. Now, tell me, what is the smell of K.S.K.?
Oh, hay, wasn't it? Most of them seemed to smell like hay.
 No.
Musty hay?
 No. That is phosgene.
Mustard-and-cress?
 No.
Geraniums?
 No. That is Lewisite.
I know! Peardrops!
 Correct. What are the two main groups of gases?
I know. One's permanent, or something, and the other blows away.
 Persistent and non-persistent. Is

B.B.C. a persistent or a non-persistent gas?
Ask me another!
 How is your breath?
Eh?
 Do stenographers wince when you enter a room?
Here, why drag that up?
 A little more alertness, please. How would you deal with an incendiary bomb?
I should run a mile.
 How would your wife deal with it in your absence?
She's a grand girl. She'd set the dog on it.
 Be serious, please. Any year now we may find ourselves at war.
All right. Well, you have a long shovel, don't you—and some sand?

No. The shovel technique is obsolete.

Oh, yes, I remember. You have a stirrup-pump and a bucket.

Correct. Have you a stirrup-pump?

No. Never seen one.

Have you made the smallest attempt to acquire a stirrup-pump?

Yes. As a matter of fact I asked at the ironmonger's, first week of the war. But he hadn't any, and after that I forgot.

Oh.
What do you mean—"Oh"?

What should you especially avoid when dealing with an incendiary bomb?

Catching fire.

You should not throw water on it from a basin or similar utensil.

Not water? Then what do I put in the bucket? Gin?

The stirrup-pump directs a fine spray or concentrated jet about or at the seat of the conflagration. The basin would cause the burning metal to scatter in all directions, and aggravate the danger.

Oh, yes. How it all comes back!

What is a sternutator?

A special respirator for— No, I know. A nose-irritant gas.

What are its effects?

It irritates the nose.

Pain, of a sharp burning character, in the forehead, nose, face, teeth, gums, throat and the upper part of the chest. Possibly, also, attacks of sneezing and coughing. A feeling of sickness, or even actual vomiting. Acute and distressing mental depression.

Golly!

None of this, however, matters.

I beg your pardon?

Little, or no, serious damage results.

I remember. You tell the fellow not to panic.

Correct. How does he feel after donning his respirator?

Much worse. But you explain to him that he's better.

Good. What is signified by the ringing of a bell?

It's foggy. A vessel's at anchor, and every two minutes she—

We are speaking of the land.

All right. A bell. A bell? I know—they ring a bell to give the alarm when the sirens don't work.

No.

I know. It means gas.

Wrong. A rattle indicates the presence of gas. The bell means "All clear."

Yes, that's what I meant.

Oh.

Not so much "Oh."

How is a horse affected by tear-gas? He cries. He simply blubbers.

Horses are not affected by tear-gas.

What an extraordinary thing!

What would you do if you saw a patch of dark brown oily liquid?

I should look for a horse.

Steady, please!

Well, I should take a good sniff at it to see what it was.

Yes?

Yes.

Go on.

Well it might be a tear-gas—C.A.P., or something—

C.A.P. is a white crystalline solid which vaporises when heated.

Oh. Well, it might be B.B.C.—smelling of acid-drops—

K.S.K., smelling of peardrops.

Gosh! How right you are! K.S.K., then, or B.B.C., smelling of carrots.

A penetrating smell.

Well, then I should tell the chaps not to worry, because it was only tear-gas, and the effects would pass off.

What else might it be?

Well, of course, it might be Lewisite, smelling of hydrangeas.

Geraniums. What else.

Well, mustard.

What is the smell of mustard-gas?

I never could smell a thing. I pretended I did, to please the lecturer.

Mustard has a very faint smell, variously described as resembling that of horse-radish, onions, garlic, or stale vaseline.

I am not familiar with the smell of stale vaseline.

How, then, would you distinguish mustard-gas?

By my not being able to smell it.

But suppose that mustard-gas were used in combination with a persistent gas that did smell—say, K.S.K.?

That would be cheating.

I suggest that you take another course of lectures.

There is something in what you say.

A. P. H.

St. James's Park in War-time

ST. James's Park in war-time is just as nice as not.
The geese are there,
The gulls are there,
The pigeons still are fat and fair,
And there are admirals everywhere—
A most distinguished spot.

St. James's Park in war-time's less sombre than before.
The decent black
The city hack
Wore daily on his head and back
Has been exchanged by Tom and Jack
For uniforms of war.

St. James's Park in war-time is more or less the same.
M.P.s by day
Pass on their way
And Military Minds delay
To watch the diving ducks at play
And ponder on their game.

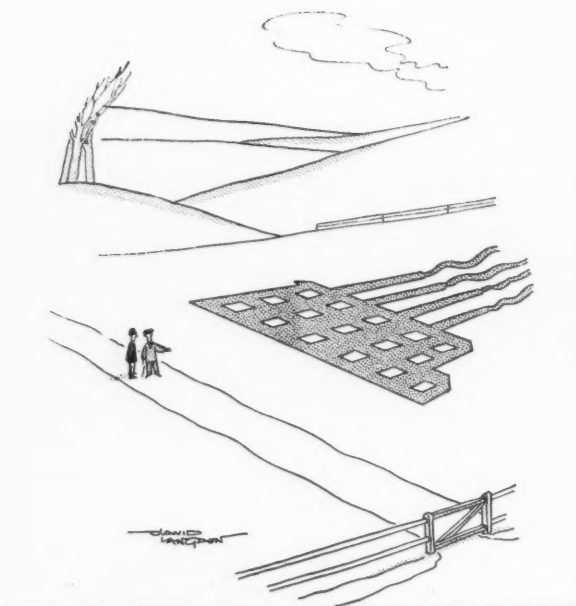
St. James's Park in war-time is still a place to see.
The birds are there,
The trees are there,
And there it's good to stand and stare
And sniff the slightly sooty air,
And then go home to tea. J. G.

Your Joke, Partner

"The L.M.S. Railway Company announces that the Herbert Jackson Prize for 1939 has been awarded to Mr. H. Andrews, of the Engineering Section, Research Department, Derby, for his paper entitled 'The Development of a Refrigerating Machine for use on Trains.'—The Times.



"I believe I'm the only person in England who breeds macons."



"They reckon there's hundreds of 'em dotted about all over the country."

By Request

WADING through the close-packed diners, a waiter breasted the rail of the orchestra's platform and handed up to the leader a slip of paper. The leader unfolded it and read it, gripping his violin under his right elbow. Then he handed the paper to one of the second violins.

"What again!" cried the second violin, exasperated. He passed the paper over his shoulder to the double-bass player, who inspected it, blew out his cheeks sadly, and whispered something in the ear of the pianist. The pianist murmured "This is too much," shifting on his stool.

The waiter was still within earshot. The second violin addressed him: "The same bloke?"

"What do you think?" replied the waiter cynically, moving away.

The accordionist slid his instrument to one side and leaned closer to the leader.

"Do we have to take any notice?" he said.

"We-ell—" The leader looked through the haze to a table where a stout beaming man was sitting by himself.

"You're too soft-hearted," said the drummer disgustedly. "They impose on you. That cove'd have us playing the damr thing all night if he could."

The leader looked at his watch. "It's an hour and a quarter since we did it last," he said. "He's entitled to have it again."

"If he's entitled to be there," said the drummer, an argumentative type. "How much has he paid? What's he had?"

"What's he had?" the clarinet-player asked, leaning

back and addressing the waiter, who was passing behind him on his way to the "In" service door.

"Who, him?" said the waiter, turning down the corners of his mouth.

Vindicated, the drummer turned from side to side waving his stick. "What did I say?" he cried. "A meanie. Next thing to a deadhead. Cup o' coffee and a glass of water and seventeen of our free matches."

"All the same, you know—" The leader smiled round deprecatingly. "We're supposed to grant requests. It won't do us any harm . . ."

The drummer made an explosive sound and sat down suddenly on the low seat he occupied for the items he was accustomed to take easily (such as "South of the Border," during practically the whole of which he caressed his drum with a wire brush). "Won't do us any harm!" he ejaculated. "Is that the sort of argument that weighs with Toscanini? I don't know about you fellers, but I've given this composition my all once this evening and now I've gone sour on it. Anyway, I have to do all the work."

"The hard manual work, may be," said the clarinet-player mildly. "But there's some tricky stuff in the—"

The drummer stood up again, stepped carefully over his miscellaneous defences and advanced sternly on the clarinet-player. "Do I understand you to imply," he began—

Another waiter edged his way to the platform, attracted the leader's attention, and handed up another note.

"That settles it," the leader said, reading it. "Here's another."

The drummer announced that he didn't believe it, and remained sceptical even when the note was displayed. "It's the same old pie-face again," he declared. "Disguised writing. False whiskers." He glared over at the fat man, who beamed back, nodding. "Toscanini," the drummer went on ferociously, picking his way back into his corner, "would disregard this as a form of blackmail."

"No reasonable request—" the leader began.

The drummer turned round and stood with his head thrust forward, repeating "Reasonable! A moron of one idea, if that, and you call his requests reasonable! . . . Why he might just as well have these things printed. We get one every night. It's humiliating. The man's a slave-driver."

The leader looked at his watch. "It's time we did something, anyway," he said.

The first waiter had emerged from the "Out" service door and the 'cellist, on the other side of the platform, had caught him and given him a commission. The waiter made his way over to the stout diner and appeared to be asking him something. The stout diner appeared to be answering. The waiter returned and said to the 'cellist: "Would you believe it, he says it's because he likes to watch the drummer!"

The 'cellist passed this information on to the pianist, who retailed it solemnly to the drummer.

The drummer sat where he was and ejaculated "Gaw." But it was time; resignedly he picked up his sticks again and launched into the opening bars of Ravel's "Bolero" . . .

It went on for as long as usual. At the end there was a good deal of applause, begun by the fat man and continued by him long after everybody else had stopped. The leader bowed two or three times uneasily, smiling.

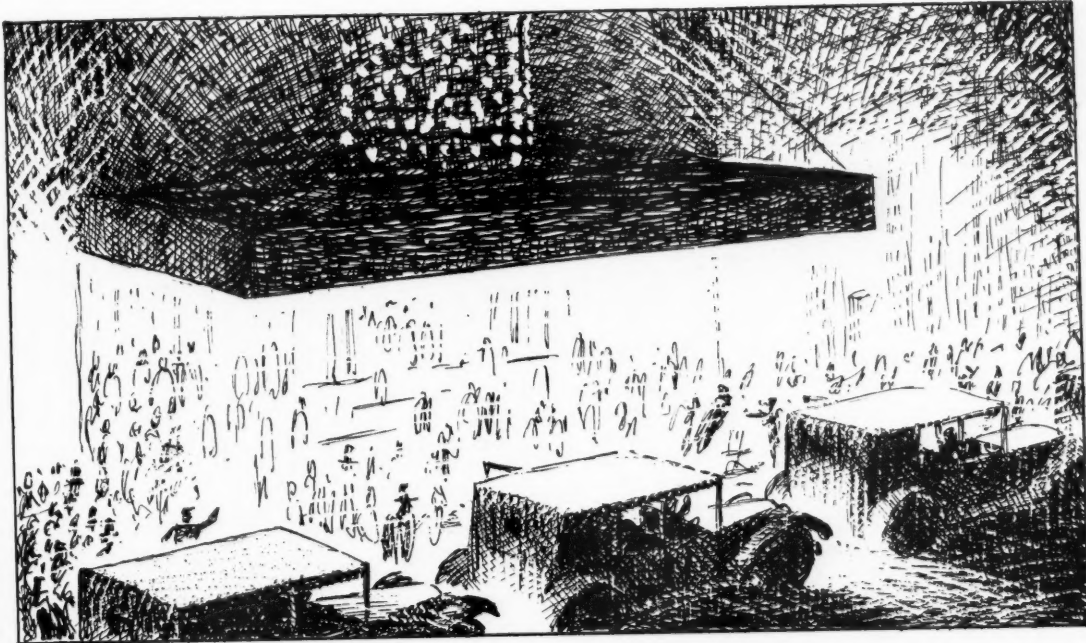
The first waiter approached with a secret grin and handed him a slip of paper. He unfolded it with a look of apprehension.

"You guessed it," he said to his colleagues. "He wants an encore."

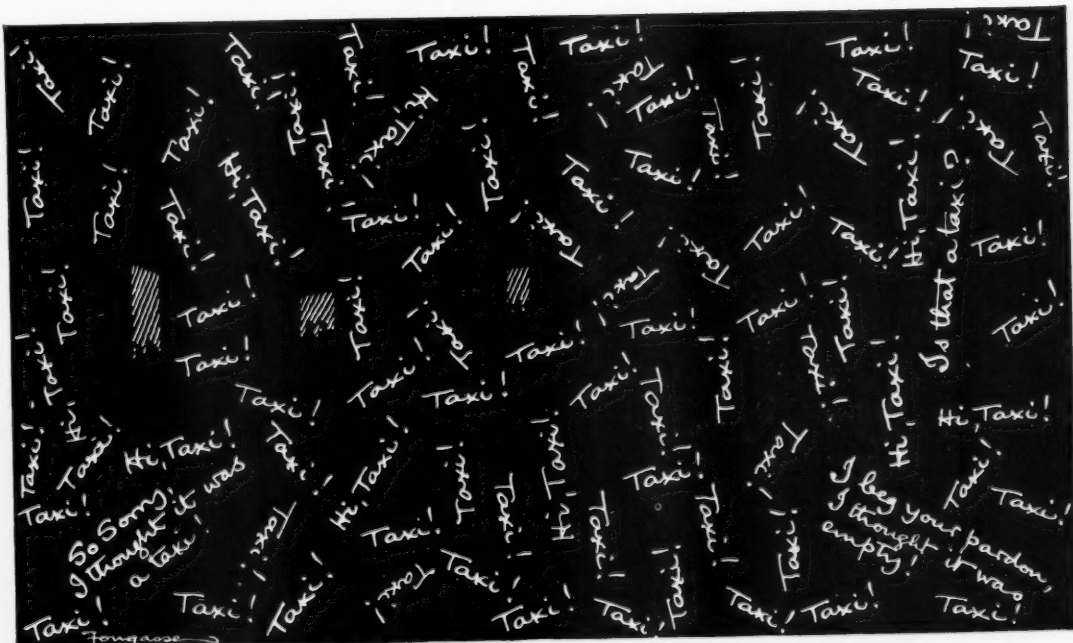
R. M.

THE CHANGING FACE OF BRITAIN

XXVI.—THEATRE EXIT



1



2



Gais

"We've named him 20566495 after his father."

Behind the Lines

XXII.—"Almost a Gentleman"

DEAR Reader (may I call you Friend?).
I've asked the Editor to lend
His columns to me. Please attend.

I am a plain bluff man—the sort
You British call a "perfect sport,"
An "English gentleman," in short:

Who shoots the fox, and hunts the boar,
And keeps the beaters in a roar
With jokes they may have heard before;

Who likes his glass, but not beyond
The second bottle, and is fond
Of pretty women (mostly blonde);

An honest man, devoid of craft,
Who's lived for sport, and loved and laughed;
A man of substance—fore and aft,

Such as an Englishman would term an
"Awfully good feller for a German"—
That's yours sincerely. Call me Hermann.

Well, here we are. Our common goal
Is Peace—and then some rigmarole,
To save our face, about the Pole.

Forget about the Poles and Czechs!
For you and me to save our necks
One man is wanted: *Hermann Rex*.

Adolf, poor fellow, doesn't play
"The cricket," as we sportsmen say—
Besides, he's crackers anyway.

You cannot trust him. I will see
To Adolf and some fifty-three
Of Adolf's yes-men . . . leaving Me.

Then, I and you, dear Readers, go
To London, Paris—yes-or-no?—
And make a little Treaty. So.

We save our cash, we save our necks,
We talk about the Poles and Czechs,
And seal and sign it: "*Hermann Rex*."

So all's as friendly as can be,
And I am made by State decree
A member of the M.C.C.

(P.S.—Excuse for talking shop:
Does any reader care to swap
A stomach-pump for Ribbentrop?)

A. A. M.

Slingsby and the Next War

IN the next war," Slingsby began, "I propose—"
"The next war?" I said. "Aren't you—?"
"Be quiet," said Slingsby, "and pay attention. I am
going to talk to you about the next war."

"But why?"

Slingsby made a gesture of impatience. "My good ass,"
he said, "it will hardly have escaped even your attention
that the present war, as a topic of conversation, is played
out. More important, all the good jobs in it have gone, and
none of them has come to me."

"I thought you were in the Ministry of Information?"
I ventured.

"I was," said Slingsby. "You know that pamphlet,
How We Won? I wrote the first eight pages. They were
much the best."

"Then why . . . ?"

Slingsby looked at me sharply. "The tea there was
filthy," he said. "Undrinkable. Camrose and I and some of
the others decided to resign. The Ministry took it awfully
well, but from what I hear they've never really got over it."
Slingsby paused. "Who's Minister this week?" he asked.
"Reith."

"Ah, well," said Slingsby, "I dare say he'll make a fist
of it. I should have thought a younger man . . . But
never mind. What were we talking about?"

"You were talking about the next war," I said.

Slingsby frowned. "So I was," he said, "and for the best
of reasons. This war is *vieux jeu*. To a young man of my
calibre it offers nothing. Same with the peace."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"What I say," snapped Slingsby. "The coming peace is
a drug on the market. Everything that can be said about
it has been said many times. People are still writing on the
subject, of course, and in some cases getting paid for it.
But they are the people who got in on the ground floor—
the high-powered bores who, as the gruesome saying goes,
have made the subject peculiarly their own. As for the
various organisations which have charged themselves with
the task of adumbrating the future of mankind—Federal
Uction, New World Order (Inc.), Mrs. Vobey's 'Out of

Chaos—What? Club, and all that lot—why the paid jobs went months ago, and so did all the honorary positions worth having. As far as I am concerned" (Slingsby spoke with a certain bitterness) "the peace is a busted flush."

"Tek, tek," I said compassionately.

"I've been slow off the mark, of course," Slingsby admitted, "as far as that racket is concerned. You know Porridge?"

"J. K. Porridge?"

"Yes."

"In the Ministry of Information, isn't he?"

"You're terribly out of date," said Slingsby severely. "Porridge had the good luck to be slung—I mean, with his usual opportunism Porridge resigned from the Ministry a whole six weeks before I did. And look at him now!"

"I can't look at him," I said. "He isn't here. And anyhow I don't know him by sight."

Slingsby withered me with a glance. "Another crack like that," he said, "and I'll have you hounded out of society."

I bowed my head, abashed.

"J. K. Porridge," Slingsby proceeded, "practically is the Next Peace. He lectures on it. He dines out on it. I'm not at all sure it doesn't get him extra petrol."

"Really?"

"Yes," Slingsby sighed. "The other day Porridge wrote a letter about the peace for publication in *The New Dyspeptic*. It was one of those We, the Undersigned, letters, and Porridge sent it round to all his Bloomsbury friends to get their signatures. I saw a copy in old Cabthorpe's flat. Cabthorpe," Slingsby added hastily, "is not a friend of mine, though his maid thinks he is. I only go to his flat during the week-end, when he is away."

"What do you go there for?" I asked.

"To steal detective stories," said Slingsby simply. "Well, having come across this letter, I thought I saw a chance of muscling in on the racket in good company. So I wrote to Porridge and asked whether he would consider adding my name to the signatories of his letter, a copy of which I had been shown and with the terms of which I found myself in the most heartfelt agreement."

"What did the letter say?" I asked. I had never known Slingsby to find himself in agreement with anyone before, except very occasionally over food.

"To tell you the truth," said Slingsby, "I can't remember. I only read the first paragraph. I fancy it was an appeal for clear thinking. It was a huge great long letter."

"I should have thought," I said cautiously, "that Porridge would have been delighted to get your signature."

"He was delighted," cried Slingsby. "At least he said he was. But where do you think he proposed to put me in? Eighth wicket down! Me! Below Bunge—"

"Leonard Bunge?"

"That's the rat. I suppose you're the sort of chap who likes his books?"

I said I thought they were rather well-written.

Slingsby snorted. "Not only was Bunge to be above me," he continued, "but who do you think was going in first wicket down?"

"Cosmo?" I hazarded. "He usually gets an early knock for the Undersigned."

"Cosmo? Cosmo who?"

"Cantuar," I said.

"Never heard of the fellow," said Slingsby testily.

"No, it was Hilary Bude!"

"Man or woman?"

"Exactly," cried Slingsby, as though he had not heard my question. "You've said it. First wicket down! And me No. 10! I ask you! Naturally there was only one thing for me to do."

"What was it?" I asked. I was getting out of my depth.

"Write an urbane but scathing letter to Porridge and withdraw my name," said Slingsby. "But why do I tell you all this?"

"I don't know," I said. "I thought we were talking about the next war."

Slingsby put his finger to his long nose and pondered. "Ah, yes," he said. "The next war. I have, as I say, excellent reasons for talking about it. In the present somewhat jejune conflict my personality and qualifications have been overlooked; I do not anticipate that Slingsby will be a decisive factor in this war. As regards the peace which is expected to succeed it, I have been left at the post; I retain few hopes of being numbered among the architects of a New Europe. There remains, for me, the next war."

"Tell me about it," I urged.

"Not now," said Slingsby, "for I am due at a protest meeting in a quarter of an hour."

"What are you protesting against?" I asked.

"I personally," said Slingsby, "am not protesting against anything. You know that I never do. But it is only by going to these protest meetings that one can keep in touch with all that is best in contemporary thought. This one, as far as I can remember, is concerned with the case of a conscientious objector who was reprimanded by a retired colonel, in the most wounding terms, for biting a policeman in the neck. A public apology by the colonel is being demanded."

"Who is demanding it?" I asked.

"How should I know?" said Slingsby, rising to go. "The great mass of informed democratic opinion, I expect, or all those who passionately believe that something or other must, now more than ever, be defended against whatever it is. Last one I went to there was only Cabthorpe and two Annamites. Good-bye."

"And the next war?" I cried. "When will you tell me about it?"

"Next week," said Slingsby, and departed, leaving behind him not only (as usual) an aura of mystery and his gas-mask, but also *Suttee in Sussex?* a thoroughly readable book. Watch the governess.

P. F.



"The silly part of the whole scheme is that I don't take sugar anyhow."



"This impertinent Neutral refers to us as 'a nation of sheep'!"

Comforts

OH, my love he has gone with the B.E.F. to wherever it is they go;
And wherever it is it's a shocking place for mud and rain and snow;
My love has a brand-new battle-dress which the Government gave him free,
But my love he would catch his death of cold, he would, if it wasn't for me.

I thought of my poor love's chilblains (they're terrible ones, my love's),
And I got some wool and a knitting-book, and I knitted some beautiful gloves;
And I thought, with all that standing about my poor love's toes will freeze,
So I knitted my love a muffler which would go twice round his knees.

Now my love, I thought, will be warm in his hands, my love will be warm in his feet,
But he must be feeling a horrible draught where his neck and his collar meet;
So I knitted my love a muffler which would go twice round his throat,
With nice long ends for my love to tuck down the front of his overcoat.

I knit for my love in the Underground, though the Underground's always full,
And I haven't room for my elbows, and people tread on the wool;
But I've knitted my love a sweater which zips up close to his chin,
And I've given it lots of pockets for my love to put things in.

I knit for my love as I wait for a bus, I knit on the District train,
And the lights go off, and the lights go on, and I have to unpick it again;
But I've knitted my love a helmet, the way the pattern said,
Which, except for his eyes and his nose and his mouth, will cover the whole of his head.

I knit for my love the livelong day, I knit far into the night;
I have knitted a muff for my love's left ear, I am knitting one for his right;
I shall make him some mittens, and bed-socks, and then, so it seems to me,
My love will be as warm and dry as my love can possibly be.

Oh, my love he has gone with the B.E.F., and wherever it is they've gone

My love may find he is much too hot with only his uniform on; But I don't think that will matter, for I know that my love must know

It isn't because I want to fuss, but because I love him so.

From the Home Front

Don't Mention It.

I DO not care at all for this Enemy who May Be Listening, the man who sits behind me in buses when I am talking about the movements of troopships and hides under the counter during my chat with the grocer on light anti-aircraft guns. It is time he was scooped up by the police, whose obvious duty is to sit in the seat next but one behind me on buses and take away all the people who whip out little notebooks as soon as I begin to speak. The reason why I do not care for this man is that I find it so difficult, when on leave, to converse at all without a guilty conscience.

"Hullo, old chap," people say to me—not always on buses of course, but in restaurants, in telephone cabinets and other places where this infernal spy is always lurking—"what have you been doing with yourself all this time?"

"Just knocking about," I say non-committally.

"In the Army now, I see."

I admit this, after reflection, because I am in khaki and there is not yet, so far as I am aware, any plan to delude the enemy into the belief that British soldiers have reverted to red coats and shakos. But the next question, "Where are you off to now?" floors me. I am not supposed, indeed I am expressly forbidden, to say where I am, where I am going to or whence I have come. I had a row with a porter once over this. He kept asking me where I was for, without, as far as I could see, the faintest appreciation of the need for secrecy about my movements. When I reminded him that we were at war and, in brief, told him point-blank that I was not permitted to answer his question, he said, How the hell in that case could he tell me which platform my train went from? In the end I compromised by saying that I proposed to detrain at Bournemouth for dispersal to further undisclosed destinations—a phrase which I borrowed from the M.O.I. Generally speaking, when asked where I am going, I simply say that I am going to the Coliseum, thus concealing the fact that I am going to the Duchess and throwing the enemy's dispositions into confusion.

"Well, well," they say, "imagine you in the Army! How do they feed you? Pretty grim, eh?"

This floors me again. Ought I to say anything about the domestic affairs of my unit or ought I not? When in doubt, say nothing, is an excellent rule but, as Gunner Briggs sagely observes, a man must talk about something. May I, for instance, tell my aunt that we found a rat in the porridge last Wednesday? Not that we did find a rat in the porridge last Wednesday—we didn't look as a matter of fact. But if we *had* found one, should I be justified in mentioning it? One would feel a bit of a cad, you see, if Haw-Haw got hold of it and went about saying the British Army fed exclusively on vermin. You know how he exaggerates.

Of course it's worse in some branches of the Service than in others. The infantry, I suppose, who play with those Bren guns and things, can speak pretty freely about their equipment. Everybody knows what a Bren gun is, so there's nothing to stop Private Black telling his mother how he caught his nose in the thingummy during tactical exercises and drew blood. But we wouldn't dare to say

a thing like that; the thingummy might be secret. Naturally, not all our thingummies are secret, but it's hard to tell which is which: so when Captain Codd, while examining the —, caught his head a — of a wallop on the —, and Gunner Robinson immediately observed "He hasn't so much — his — as — his —," the whole point of the pun was lost to the general public. It isn't much comfort to know that he's going to reproduce it in full in his Memoirs as soon as the war's over.

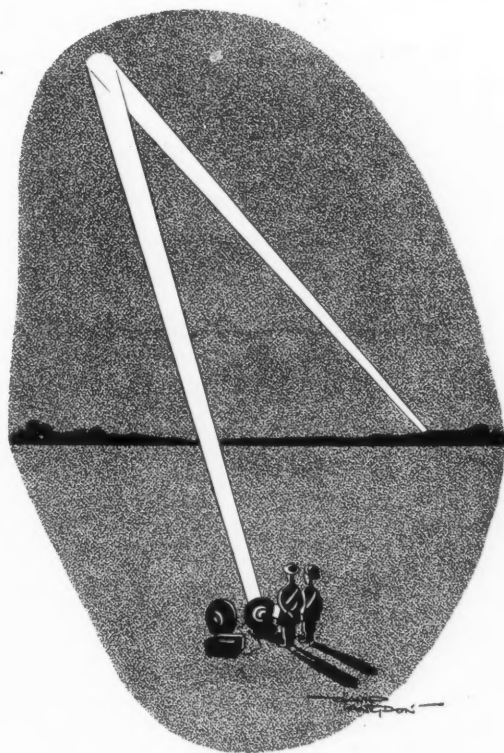
Still, on the whole we are all agreed here that less talking all round wouldn't do much harm—and not only in the Services. Gunner Briggs put in a really strenuous cook-house fatigue the other day, hundreds of plates to wash up, plenty of well-greased dixies to clean, carrots to scrape—thousands and thousands of carrots, he says—meals to lay and serve, and all the other fascinating details of a day on cookhouse; and in the evening, weary and bespattered, he sat himself down and switched his wireless on. It was then that a voice—a smooth fat voice, Briggs says—told him that he couldn't expect to win this war by sitting down and doing nothing. "People," Gunner Briggs observes, "should be more careful what they say. They don't know who may be listening."

H. F. E.

Over-Confidence

"LOUIS HAD THE BEST OF THE FIFTH ROUND AND THE SIXTH WAS WITHOUT OUTSTANDING INCIDENT. IN THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH ROUNDS GODOY FOUGHT BACK WELL DRIVING THE CHAMPION FIRST TO A NEUTRAL CORONER AND THEN TO THE ROPES."

Tape Machine.



"There goes old Pletcheridge over at the Grange—no imagination, no imagination."



"Are these war-time revues all remarkably alike, or do we keep on going to the same show by mistake?"

My Vocal Pluralist

(The broadcasting authorities have a difficulty in getting imitations of animals.)

THE B.B.C., to whom we turn
For guidance on the upward
track,

Have just developed, as I learn,
A somewhat unexpected lack.

No matter here of grave uplift
Or theme to gild with noble words;
They're after someone with a gift
For imitating beasts and birds.

I've tried my best for some few hours
But, finding the results are mild,
I recommend the untaught powers
Of my near neighbour's meaty child.

Expectant of his joint of horse
The lion's voice can shake the Zoo

Yet, not in dignity but force,
That boy can roar enough for two.

And you, that nightly heard of old
The jackals' yell in Hindostan,
Had he been there you'd not have
told
Where they left off and he began.

So, 'twixt the peacock's rainy screech
And his you'd find it hard to
choose,
Though in this line he seems to
reach
His highest point with cockatoos.

I've heard him, oodled by his dam,
Mew like a fireside cat, all smiles,

And then he'll hurl things from his pram
And bawl like Thomas on the tiles.

There are, I freely own to that,
Some creatures he has yet to mime,
But I'd not put it past the brat
To tackle any, give him time.

And even as these lines are penned
There rises on the ambient air
A brand-new something like a blend
Of bison, elephant and bear.

In short, if what they want's a well
Of pure brute noises undefiled,
They should exploit the myriad yell
Of my near neighbour's ghastly
child. DUM-DUM.



WHO AIDS?



"Lawful Occasions"

Mr. PUNCH'S HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND

YOU are asked to think of the Navy at sea, the men in the trenches, the men flying, minesweepers, searchlight posts, anti-aircraft stations. All are in exposed, cold, wet situations. They need Balaclava helmets, stockings, gloves, mittens and woollen waistcoats for the winter.

Mr. Punch has already distributed large quantities of materials of all kinds, but there is a great deal more to be done. Cold weather has arrived and the need for woollen articles is very urgent. Every penny subscribed will be used for the comfort of the men serving, or Hospital patients, and no expenses whatever will be deducted. Though we know well that these are days of privation and self-denial for all, we

yet ask you, those who can, to send us donations, large or small, according to your means; for experience in the last war has proved a hundred times over how urgent is the call and how invaluable is the assistance that can be rendered. Will you please address all contributions and inquiries to: Punch Hospital Comforts Fund, 10 Bouverie Street London, E.C.4.

MATERIAL DISTRIBUTED TO DATE

Knitting Wool . . .	14,162 lb.	Ripple Cloth . . .	1,579 yds
Winceyette . . .	9,876 yds.	Chintz	350 "
Flannelette . . .	3,952 "	Turkish Towelling	86 "
Bleached Calico .	1,520 "	Turkey Twill . . .	60 "
Unbleached Calico	1,350 "	Kapok	75 lb.

Impressions of Parliament

Synopsis of the Week

Tuesday, February 13th.—Lords: Various Measures Advanced.
Commons: Railway Agreement debated.

Wednesday, February 14th.—Commons: Agriculture (Miscellaneous War Provisions) Bill taken in Committee.

Thursday, February 15th.—Lords: Various Measures advanced, including the Cotton Bill.

Commons: Committee Stage of Agriculture (Miscellaneous War Provisions) Bill concluded. Rating and Valuation (Postponement of Valuations) Bill given Second Reading.

Tuesday, February 13th.—If a soldier who has only one uniform gets it wet or spoilt while on leave there are two officially approved courses open to him: "athletic exercise," for which he is allowed to change, or bed. If he goes out in his old civilian suit while the uniform is being dried or cleaned then he becomes fair game for the military police. The War Office apparently sees nothing funny in the idea of a shivering soldier wasting his leave running round Battersea Park, and Mr. VERNON BARTLETT's appeal to reason this afternoon made no impression on the MINISTER. The



ON HIS HOBBY
MR. HERBERT MORRISON

rule applies also to officers. The first enterprising cleaning company to make an all-day hockey match part of their inclusive service should do very well.

The country has supported the Conversion Loan magnificently. Already more than two-thirds of the total has been converted, and the CHANCELLOR told the House he was extremely satisfied.

Mr. SUMNER WELLES' visit was very welcome, said Mr. CHAMBERLAIN, and he would be taken fully into the Government's confidence in order that President ROOSEVELT should get as clear a picture as possible of what was happening here. Such information would only be passed on to the PRESIDENT and Mr. HULL.

To listen to Mr. HERBERT MORRISON—and everyone likes to do this—you might easily have imagined that where the nationalisation of railways has been tried abroad it has invariably been a roaring success, and that the Government's new agreement with the Companies was only another capitalist manoeuvre for diverting tax-payers' money into the pockets of rapacious shareholders. In fact the reverse is the case, for nationalised railways have nearly always proved a most expensive venture, and the Government's scheme,

far from costing the Treasury a penny, puts a limit to the bigger profits which the companies are bound to earn in war-time and ensures that the Treasury will share in these up to a point beyond which it will absorb them completely.

Not that Mr. MORRISON was extended on the subject; he was academic rather than indignant, and hardly had his forelock risen to its full height than he sat down. Apart from his general thesis that nationalisation was the answer to all the troubles of transport, he objected to the omission of 1938 from the years to be averaged, to the misplaced generosity of the settlement, proved by the excited reaction of the Stock Exchange, and to the bolstering-up of the railways at a time when the road haulage industry was in great distress.

Captain WALLACE defended the omission of 1938 on the grounds that the decline in receipts that year was temporary, as was shown by the figures for 1939. He compared the scheme favourably with that in operation during the last war, when the Government took a bumper year as the standard for their guarantee and had to pay out over £100,000,000. Under the present scheme the Government



POOR AUNT COLLIE!

The Agricultural Bill, of which Mr. Colville was in charge, was attacked from both sides of the House.



IN THE HALL OF FAME

It is announced that the Member for Silvertown is about to retire.



"I'm looking for a snub-nosed man with side-whiskers and a mole over the right eye. Have you seen anyone answering this description?"

were paying for the use of the railways as they went along, and were encouraging efficiency by sharing profits. The companies would be liable for E.P.T. Rates and fares would be adjusted by the MINISTER, answerable to the House. Wages had been increased the day the agreement was signed. There was no indication that the railways were buying up road transport concerns at knock-out prices. The question of putting the canals to better use was under consideration.

Mr. GRAHAM WHITE asked for a more unified control of transport, Sir GEORGE COURTHOPE assured the Opposition that shareholders were by no means satisfied when they considered how heavily the L.P.T.B. was likely to lean on the pool, and Sir RALPH GLYN was rightly indignant about suggestions that Lord STAMP had persuaded the Government to be kind to the railways. In the Peers' Gallery Lord STAMP smiled gently.

Wednesday, February 14th.—Mr. CHURCHILL drew a cheer when he refused to consider Col. WEDGWOOD's suggestion that as a reprisal for the German Air Force's murderous attacks on our unarmed seamen we should no

longer send out rescue vessels when German machines were shot down.

Stalwart champion of fox and stag, Mr. LEACH harried the Front Bench on the effects of hunting on the nation's food supply. From Mr. RAMSBOTHAM's answers it seemed that while the number of foxes is being suitably reduced there is no risk of the animal actually dying out.

When the Government's war-time Agricultural Bill was taken in Committee, Mrs. TATE was unsuccessful with her amendment to reduce the qualification for the ploughing-up subsidy from seven years under grass to five, but the Government only got home by thirty-three votes.

A clause dealing with drainage brought Mr. LLOYD GEORGE indignantly to his feet again to describe the Ministry's intentions in this direction as piffling. Mr. RAMSBOTHAM, however, assured him that a great deal of drainage had been carried out recently and that all the Bill aimed at was the filling of a gap.

Later, Mr. JOHN MORGAN told the heartening story of how a stretch of land in Sussex had been reclaimed by four land-girls, one of whom had been

a Bond Street mannequin and one a tap-dancer.

Thursday, February 15th.—Several members of the Upper Witan were seen to be breathing deeply and sadly to themselves while the Brighton Marine Palace and Pier Bill was getting its Second Reading. The Cotton Bill was similarly treated but gave rise to less pleasant associations. Lord PONSONBY's request for a secret session was turned down by the FOREIGN SECRETARY.

In the Lower Witan, Mr. ELLIOT enlarged on the Government's announcements about evacuation. The four hundred thousand children still in the reception areas are to be encouraged to remain, and a further large-scale exodus is planned should heavy raids develop. This will be voluntary, but parents who register must sign a promise to send their children away when able to do so and to leave them in the country until schools return.

When the Agriculture Bill was again taken in Committee a determined Conservative attempt to reduce the rate of interest at which farmers could borrow was successfully fended off by the Front Bench.

Conversation Without Tears

"IT'S so interesting," said Mrs. Sharpe, as she sat down in my aunt's drawing-room: "do you remember a very handsome person—a lady—whom I brought to tea here two or three years ago?"

"I am not quite sure . . ." began my aunt, pouring out tea.

"Well, anyhow, I did: you must take my word for that. Her name was Mrs. Latimer. Well, Mrs. Latimer went to live at Cambridge some fifteen years ago (she was only staying here when I brought her to see you), but her family had always lived in the same village in Somerset as my husband's. Well, just before the New Year Mrs. Latimer received a call from another lady, a Mrs. Memsworth, who told her in the course of her visit that she had known some mutual friends of both of them—and that their name was Sharpe."

"Ah!"

"No, but wait a minute: it so happened that Mr. Latimer (who, by the way, happens to be dead) used to coach for Littlego or something a couple of boys called Sharpe, who had, so far as I know, no connection with my husband's people, and as Mrs. Latimer had taken a great interest in those boys (one of them went out to Burma, but the other I really forget where she said he was) she rather naturally connected up mentally with them rather than with our family, and it was only after Mrs. Memsworth had left that Mrs. Latimer thought of us. But the maddening thing is that Mrs. Memsworth never left cards at all: consequently she has not been able to get into touch again yet. I do think people should leave cards."

"Well, but it may have been the Sharpe boys all the time," said my aunt.

"Possibly," conceded Mrs. Sharpe: "on the other hand, it may have been us, and Mrs. Latimer feels that Mrs. Memsworth seemed rather at sea about the Sharpes she was talking about. Between ourselves, Mrs. Latimer is a great talker. I do so want to get the mystery cleared up, you know."

"Oh, I expect Mrs. Latimer will run into her again before long."

"Oh, without a doubt, and of course my husband is even more excited than I am, as it is *his* family that is involved."

"Doesn't Mr. Sharpe remember the lady at all?"

"He knows no Memsworth, but, you

see, Memsworth is only the married name of the lady."

At this juncture my Uncle George came in and announced that Mrs. Sharpe was wanted on the telephone. After a few minutes she came back radiant.

"It's all right," she announced. "Mr. Sharpe opened Mrs. Latimer's letter. It was us all the time—I thought so all along. Mr. Sharpe sees from the letter that Mrs. Memsworth was a Miss Hopper, and he says there were six sisters, so it may be any one of them."

"How are you going to find out which?" asked my aunt.

"Oh, I write constantly to Mrs. Latimer, and if you'll excuse me I will fly off so as not to miss the post."

"Shall you go down to Cambridge?" asked my aunt as they all got up, "and have a reunion?"

"Oh, hardly: oh, no. It isn't as if we knew the Memsworth lady at all, but Mrs. Latimer will probably be coming down to me in the summer and we shall have a great talk about it all, you may be sure."



"'Ard work, is it? I bet old Gobbles at 'Amburg would give fifty quid to 'ave 'arf your complaint."

At the Revue

"LIGHTS UP!" (SAVOY)

IN his delightful treatise on wise idleness, *The Importance of Living*, Mr. LIN YUTANG devised a formula for expressing the different characteristics of the nations. It worked pretty accurately in spite of being very compact. H stood for Humour, R for Realism, and so on, and each letter was numbered up to four. I feel that if the mental barrier separating Paris from Berlin can thus be reduced to half a line, when on the physical plane even M. MAGINOT had to have a whole one, revue should be capable of similar statement.

M E L C W H D P seems to do it. M stands for music, E for eye, or décor and dresses, L for lyrics, C for the Chorus, W for wit, H for humour, D for individual dances, and P for plums of special interest falling outside these categories, such as, for instance, the appearance of a cyanide-drinking boy from Saskatchewan.

On this basis Mr. COCHRAN's new revue, by Mr. RONALD JEANS and others, strikes me as

M³ E³ L² C³ W¹ H² D³ P.

Please note that I have adhered to Mr. LIN's severe standard of marking and that P unnumbered is no reflection on the programme but merely indicates that it doesn't happen to include eccentric turns.

Mr. NOEL GAY fully earns three pips for M with tunes which should bring some tonic fresh air to dance-floors round which rabbits have been running and barrels rolling for rather long. So does Miss DORIS ZINKEISEN for E with clever unlaboured designs and a charming use of colour. On the whole the lyrics are pedestrian, but they must have two because of Mr. ARTHUR WIMPERIS's "Only a Glass of Champagne," a mock period morality (beautifully handled by Miss EVELYN LAYE) and "C'est la Guerre," a neat song which Mr. CLIFFORD MOLLISON and

MARTYN GREEN deliver with admirable crispness.

C's single mark makes me feel terribly ungallant, but Mr. COCHRAN's Young Ladies, usually faultless, have

struck a bad patch. This Chorus is neither well-matched nor well-drilled. That W doesn't get more than one matters very little in this kind of programme; H is much more vital, and the two it gets are roundly earned not only by the two principals but by a capable team in support. As for D's three marks, it could hardly have less in view of Miss PHYLLIS STANLEY's originality and Mr. ROBERT LINDON's brilliant bonelessness.

I have never seen either Miss LAYE or Mr. MOLLISON in better form. They are both versatile and their material shows off their range to advantage; and—how pleasant it is to be able to record this simple little fact!—they can both sing. Together they have a very funny conjuring turn in which Miss LAYE as a conjuror's idiot assistant spills bean after bean of her master's pitiful store, and she has a good scene with Mr. GREEN in a song called "It's Just Not Me." In sketches of the British family, Mr. MOLLISON makes an excellent "Dad," and he is equally persuasive as one of the Ugly Sisters and as an American Radio Announcer commenting on the war. This radio scene is notable for Mr. JAMES HAYTER's life-like impersonation of Lord Haw-Haw.

Miss DORIS HARE, who is funnier every time I see her, has a grand song entirely to her taste in "I Didn't Really Never Oughter 'Ave Went," in which she appears as a small male evacuee revolted by the crudity of country life, and she has several other good parts in Cockney sketches. (Most of the sketches go on too long, but that isn't her fault.) Miss STANLEY's vivid performance ranges from the slightly macabre to a rustic scene in the manner of FRAGONARD; her dancing is interesting and unusual. As for Mr. LINDON, he is a male TILLY LOSCH, marvellously flexible and inhumanly coordinated in movement.

As I said before:

M³ E³ L² C³ W¹ H² D³ P.

ERIC.



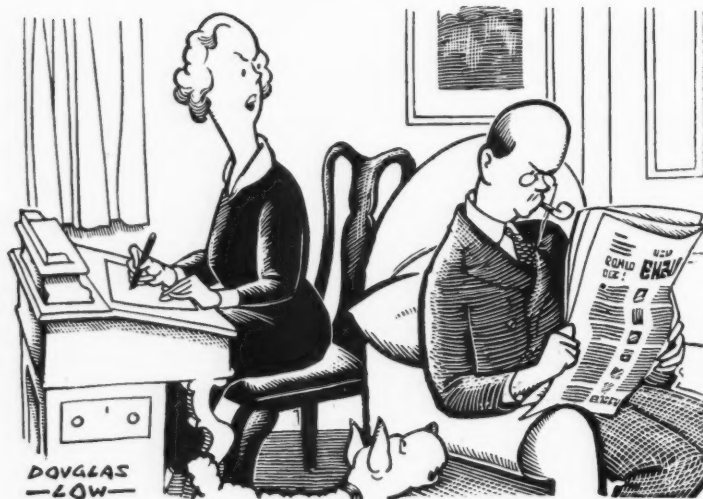
A BIT OF OLD LONDON

MISS DORIS HARE



STOLEN THUNDER

The Great Carlo MR. CLIFFORD MOLLISON
His Assistant MISS EVELYN LAYE



"I still don't see why my letter was censored—there was nothing vulgar in it."

Molesworth the Good

Contains: Time-Tables of hols, girls, rats, farms and good conduc.

Dec. 29. Down to stay at aunt ciss farm for rest of hols chiz. Aunt ciss meet us in britches also weedy girl called ermintrude and avakuee called Ivy. Who is a titch. They sa where is your brother. I sa i do not kno honest injun but he was here a minit ago and they find him in lugage rack blubbing. molesworth 11 sa I haf pute him there. He is a sneke and just because he coming to school nex term he swanks and mucks about. He is absolutely weedy.

Dec. 30. All girls are weedy, espeshally ermintrude.

Dec. 31. There is a tuough bull here called Jack it is ferce and i tie bunch of carrots to its tale. Molesworth 11 sa go it and then snekes to aunt Ciss chiz and she sa sit quietly with ermintrude chiz chiz chiz. Ermintrude is goody goody she loves pritty flowers and doesnt muck about with her food. She sa it is rude to make lake in mashed potatoes with gravy. She likes prunes (swank). Tonite Aunt ciss read us a book eric or little by little which is not bad actually. Ermintrude sa why can't you be good like that.

Jan. 1. New Year resoution detmin to be good.

Jan. 2. Try out my catterpult and see Aunt Ciss in her britches. Refrane.

Then molesworth 11 come up and sa "you haf a face like a squashed tomatoe." when i do not tuough him up he sa it like a trillion squashed tomatoes. At tea I wash hands and some of face. Ermintrude sa i look more human. Chiz? She is not bad actually. She haf not missed sunda school for 3 years. Co.

Jan. 3. Aunt ciss give us party and we pla postmans knock chiz chiz chiz weedy. I call out little girl with pink ribon but when she see me she blub and run away. molesworth 11 go out but when he do not call anebody aunt ciss find him in the larder eating jelly. He tie ermintrude's pigtale to xmas tree and get sent to bed. Absolute snubs. I hide under sofa to avoid dancing actually and find ivy there. I sit on her tofees but she sa garn she like them better with hairs on.

Jan. 4. Find topping dead rat in one of the lofts and molesworth 11 sa I can give him two sloses for it. no i sa you can haf it for nothing. He sa thanks awfully then call me measly flea and rune away. Gratitude? at nite I find rat in bed and rise full of wrath to slorter him but rember i am good. All the same will tuough him up when I stop. Put rat tidily in wash-basin but friten maid in morning when she come and she haf hystericks. Aunt Ciss give me 6 with hairbrush chiz. Ermintrude ignore me.

Jan. 7. Ermintrude is peculiar she

do lessons in the hols for fun and dances weedily. She give me her autograff book as favour were everone had written weedy things like cheerio gwen. I draw fat person aunt Ciss but change it into cow. Ermintrude get batey and sa she will not let me see her botany Book now. She praktise piano fairy dance awful. I sa not bad and she call me Sir galahad. unfortunately Molesworth 11 hapned to be by on way to larder and he larff like anything. He is weedy and swanks just becos he haf septick spots.

Jan. 11. Aunt ciss take us to panto in her old grid. jack and the beanstalk rather weedy as they all fall in love. molesworth 11 flick toofee papers on peoply downstairs and Ivy eat orange. molesworth 11 buy pips for a d. and bombs downstairs like anything. Aunt ciss give him 6d for hitting mrs fulkington-Brown. Ermintrude aloof but she sa the faires are beautiful: widow Twanky say dam and ivy larff so much she choke and swallow pip.

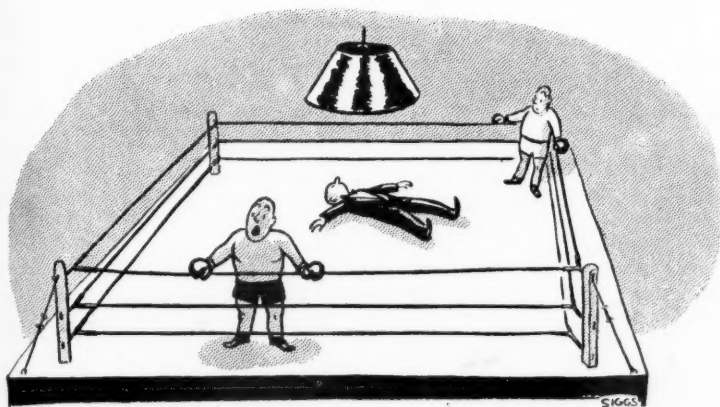
Jan. 12. Snow. Detmin to stop being good.

Jan. 13. Toda i will tuough up the bull, hide aunt ciss britches snoball ermintrude and teach molesworth 11 sharp lesson. Go out mightily to carry out plans ree bull. and coolect coollosal snoball but bull turn and lick my hand and i haf not the heart. It is not a bad bull so detmin to throw snoball at molesworth 11 insted. Find him coolecting bad words from bill the labourer in harnes room. Wam bonk throw ball but hit bill. Molesworth 11 learn new words. Ivy come in highly delighted she haf lost her pants but ermintrude practise greek dance indoors. I think she is mouldy after all.

Jan 15. Moan groan can't seem to stop being good. Must do better. Ermintrude come into sno but pla girly games. She sa eenee meene miny mo and wallflowers wallflowers grow so tall but ermintrude is the strongest and out you must go. molesworth 11 pla but chizzes and sa he haf not been tagged. Ermintrude sa sliding is comon but skating graceful. She swank she can skate so we find pond with thin ice and she fall in splosh. Aunt Ciss sa what a shame then give us sixpence. She is sporting.

Jan. 17. Molesworth 11 teeche bills words to the parot but parot tell him off. Parot is Chapel.

Jan. 20. Rover the sheepdog dig up rat so i prepare trap for molesworth 11, pute it in his bed also holly and buket of water on door. Then I sa fetch the air gune molesworth 11 o you might and he go off but meet ermintrude who sa she always happy to rune



"Is there a referee in the building, please?"

an erand. Molesworth 11 sa okay and while he gone he steal her butter rashon. Water fall on ermintrude and she sa I am a beastly beast and she will never let me see her botany Book. Don't want to so boo. molesworth 11 discover rat and offer it to parrot. Parrot use one of bill's words and ivy come back wet as she haf sat down in puddle. All sent to bed.

Jan. 24. Back to school weedy school. Moan and jasper. Packing and all sad even bull and parrot. Bull roars and i give it old carrot but Ivy blub becos it was hers. Parrot sing Polly pute the kettle on which it only do under stress of great emotion. Sa goodbye and off to station in old grid. Molesworth 11 sa he will take photo of ermintrude but when he click camera out fly rat on spring. Train comes in express called corfe Castle 4-6-2 streamlined. chuff chuff wizz wave to aunt ciss and put molesworth 11 in lugage rack. Settle down to micky mouse weekly. Boo to school.

Jan. 25. 7267354 secs to end of term.

THE END.

• •

Secret Service Nights

"LOLA Y is here again," said the Chief, biting his moustache savagely. "She was dropped from a Heinkel bomber during a recent raid over the Shetland Islands and has made her way south as far as Castlemills. You must get her, S.W.7."

I nodded and withdrew. During my forty years in the Secret Service I have

many times crossed the path of Lola Y. Sometimes she has come off with the honours, as when she hocused me with muffins at Bury St. Edmunds in '26. Sometimes I have triumphed, as when I threw her over the Niagara Falls in '32.

I disguised myself as a German disguised as an English sportsman, with plus-fours of Harris tweed and a deer-stalker hat containing a large selection of rather ostentatious flies. Over my shoulder I flung a bag of golf-clubs, and in my left hand I carried a cricket-bag containing a small torpedo. In dealing with a woman like Lola Y one never knows when one may be glad of a torpedo.

She was staying at the Royal Hotel in the great northern industrial town, under the name of Heinz-Bülow; and the manager of the hotel told me in strict confidence that she was an agent of the British Secret Service, travelling

under a German name so that German spies would confide in her.

Unannounced I burst into her private sitting-room and found her alone drinking neat whisky. I closed the door carefully behind me, locked it and put my cricket-bag on an occasional table. I then stood on my head, which is the secret sign used by all German Secret Agents.

She laughed.

"I was wondering when you would come," she said in fluent Arabic. "You are just in time. General Puff-Adderly will be here in ten minutes to sell me the plans of the new Underground Tank."

I had hardly seated myself when the General was announced, under the name of Tripeley. There was no mistaking, however, those rugged features. His face was contorted with pain.

"Fräulein," he said, "who is this man?"

"Westover-Cholmondeley," I said hastily, "of the Somerset Westovers and the Northumberland Cholmondeleys. You can speak quite freely in front of me, General, for I am in the same boat as yourself. I have come here to sell the Fräulein the plans of the new Aerial Submarine."

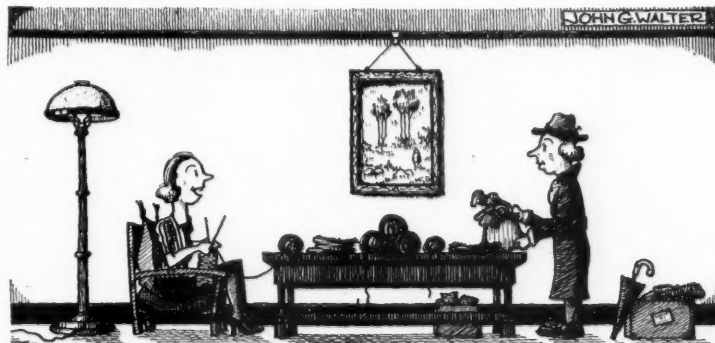
"Pleased to meet you," said the General.

"Not at all," I replied.

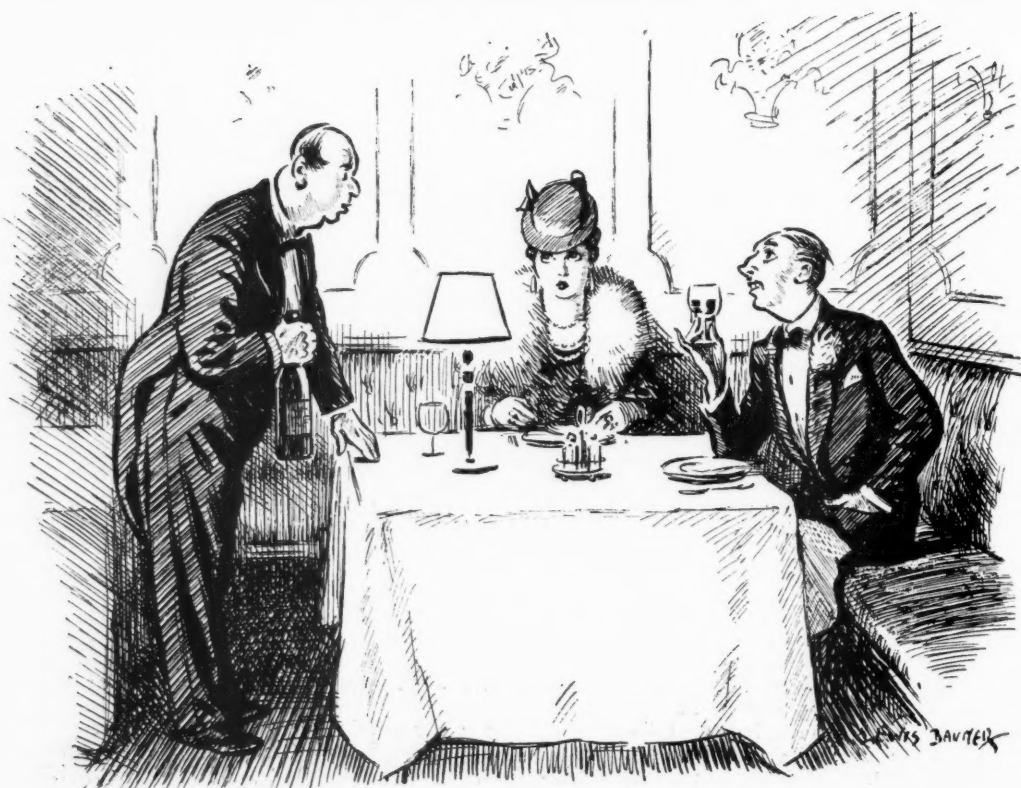
My only hope was to get him alone and to put to him, as man to man, the heinousness of his crime. It seemed to me that the best way to do this was to drop Lola Y out of the window, and this I accordingly did, somewhat to her surprise.

"General," I said sternly, "I am S.W.7 of the British Secret Service. I suggest that you die by your own hand."

"Only too pleased," said the General courteously, "but I left my revolver at home. Damned careless of me, I know,



"Ob, mittens are easy. You just knit a pair of gloves and cut off the fingers."



"To be quite frank with you, waiter, this wine tastes exactly as if it had been lying in some musty cellar for years and years."

but it makes it a bit awkward, doesn't it?"

"In that bag," I said, pointing to my cricket-bag on the occasional table, "you will find a small but efficient torpedo. I suggest that you go into the next room and torpedo yourself."

Rather wistfully he withdrew, and a moment later there was a loud explosion. Lola Y rushed into the room, her eyes ablaze.

"You are S.W.7," she said accusingly. "You used the same technique as when you dropped me over the Niagara Falls. You have won this round, but we will meet again."

I had her arrested, of course, but with a woman like Lola Y arrest is a mere formality. She escaped from Castlemills Gaol that night disguised as an escaping prisoner, and the double-bluff succeeded. Unless I am much mistaken the cobra which I found in my laundry-basket a few days later was Lola's way of telling me that she had neither forgotten nor forgiven.

Letters from a Gunner

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I am now suffering from one of those rarer phenomena, an instantaneous and singularly appropriate judgment inflicted by the gods upon human presumption.

The whole story is short and cruel. Unguardedly I happened to say in the mess one evening that we ought to have a regimental magazine. The Colonel said "Right! Excellent! Get on with it." In a word I am Acting Honorary and (I imagine) Temporary Editor of the Regimental Magazine.

Imagine my feelings, as earlier writers used to say, as I contemplated the magnitude of the task. First, on what design to build? *Punch* or *La Vie Parisienne*? A discreet copy of, say, the Gas Light and Coke Company's House Journal, or, throwing all ambitions to the winds, something modelled

on the Nether Workshop Parish Magazine, with an account of the Darts Match between the Mess Orderlies of 1001 Battery and the staff of the Regimental Medical Post as its high spot? Of course when you think it out it largely depended upon the nature of the contributions received. If any of the Batteries offered their range of canteen illustrations it would undoubtedly be *La Vie Parisienne*.

I took the plunge and persuaded the Adjutant (who I fear regards me as a frivolous intrusion on serious business) to send out a correct Army letter, appropriately headed "Subject—Instruction and Recreation," announcing the future existence of the Magazine and asking for contributions.

After that there was dead silence for a fortnight. I occupied myself by copying out a few recipes from Mrs. Beeton ("Take a ton of bully beef and

forty eggs . . .") and in writing my first article. It was so short I can give it to you in full. It was headed "Fashion Notes" and ran: "In war-time there are no fashions. Women simply wear clothes." There I encountered an illustrated weekly and tore the article up.

The first contribution at last arrived. I recognised the author's name. A charming fellow, once an ornament in the office of the Municipal Water Department and now Canteen Orderly. It was entitled "Life's a Battle," and started thus: "When lights are dim and hearts are low, don't think of him and long ago. Look forward to the days ahead, when Spring is here and the sunset's red." I rejected it as being a little too derivative.

Next came a long article on "Foreign Holidays with the Y.M.C.A." As we may very well take a foreign holiday without the aid of the Y.M.C.A. I rejected that also.

After these two set-backs the tide turned temporarily. Someone supplied

a model Training Programme for Christmas Day. It started with "8.30: Orderly Sergeant wakes Orderly Officer. 8.31: Orderly Sergeant shot," and that seemed so encouraging that I swallowed the rest. In the meantime I had written a loathsome appreciation of an E.N.S.A. concert, which all helped.

Another inspiration was to collect suitable messages of congratulation from those whose positions made it difficult for them to refuse. The fact that they had not seen the magazine made everyone's task much easier, and another page was filled up. But by this time publication date was almost at hand. I had another interesting article on "War Surcharges in Modern Philately," and one on "Pets in War-time," but somehow the required bulk was not there. Should I fill up the gaps with some old notes of the Colonel on his celebrated lecture on "Discipline" or rehash a highly technical article in our Professional Journal on "The

Origins of the Siege Train, with notes on Turenne"?

I never solved the problem. An unknown gunner contributed a fairy story entitled "Adolf, Hermann and Uncle Joe at Christmas," and a Battery-Commander some diverting Regimental Orders that left hardly a person in the Regiment unlabelled. All was saved.

To conclude, I ought to say that the most pungent criticism of the whole production came from my servant, Gunner Killey. He read it solemnly through without a smile. "A bit 'ighbrow," he said, after a considerable pause. "Wants to be a bit more sexy, to my way of thinking."

We'll see what we can do at Easter.

Your loving Son,

HAROLD.

o o

"Although the Hairdressing Staff have done splendidly, the need for a head has been apparent."—Advertisement Letter.

We can imagine.



"Funny—I've never seen that shop before."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Forty Years Backward

THE thing that takes one's fancy most
In *Portrait of a Young Man* (FABER'S)
Is that the subject has a host
Of friends and relatives and neigh-
bours

Whose varied details catch the eye,
Sketched lightly in, yet full of
vigour,

As background to the rather shy
Self-deprecating central figure.

They show together, he and they,

The nineteenth century as it passes
Into the twentieth—happy day
For England's upper-middle classes,
Solid, respectable, secure,
Grousing a bit, but fairly certain
That ease and comfort must endure
At least until the final curtain.

The young man's life is traced from
birth

To Eton, Woolwich and the Forces;
We share his joy in things of earth,
Its fields and trees, its hounds and
horses;

We learn how even bashful males
At times by female wiles are
smitten—

All with the charm of other tales
Which FRANKLIN LUSHINGTON has
written.

The Silurist At Home

The historical novel is an excellent hardy hybrid, and it has been much improved by the habit of research. Miss HELEN ASHTON's *The Swan of Usk* (COLLINS, 9/-) is a very careful, very sympathetic reconstruction of the life of HENRY VAUGHAN based on original sources. The background of England and the Welsh Border in the confusion of the Civil Wars is as vivid as imagination can make it, and Miss ASHTON has resisted the temptation to drag in well-known characters by the scruff of the neck, concentrating instead on her portraits of HENRY and TOM, his twin brother, as undergraduates, students and royalist soldiers. If a poet should be judged by his sea-pieces, an historical novelist stands or falls by his battles; Miss ASHTON's are astonishingly convincing, and she is equally good on seventeenth-century Oxford and that odd mixture of superstition and science, seventeenth-century medicine. This is an admirable book, but there are two serious objections to it. First, as Miss ASHTON had access to



Small boy (much interested in Shopman's reason for high price of eggs). "BUT, MUMMY, HOW DO THE HENS KNOW WE'RE AT WAR WITH GERMANY?"

G. L. Stampa, February 24th, 1915

unpublished material originally collected for a new life of VAUGHAN, and as VAUGHAN, like DYER, sadly needs a full-length biography, it was surely worth while to write the biography itself and to give accurate references. Secondly,

there is only the very barest reference to VAUGHAN as a mystic and a religious poet; and although the preface explains that this subject is "better omitted from a novel," VAUGHAN without mysticism and without the obscure, beautiful, timeless lyrics which affect even a casual reader so powerfully, is, to use his own emblem, a flint without fire.

Growing Pains

The "blurb" which announces *Summer's Lease* (CAPE, 9/6) is misleading. Not even "in many aspects" is the life of *Douglas Caise* "the life of every one of his generation." Few people, surely, are consciously aware at the age of twelve of pain as a problem, or feel the fascination as well as the terror of it; comparatively few grow up under the menace of blindness; and few, finally, are so unfortunate as to have for both father and mother a *don manqué*, with the escapism, the refusal to face parental or other realities, which that implies. *Douglas Caise* is, in short, something more interesting than just another contemporary Everyman. Miss E. ARNOT ROBERTSON is not content to take that easy way with her characters. She has thoroughly imagined and carefully presented an individual "in many aspects" exceptional, developing among special and also rather exceptional circumstances. She has put a tax on a delicate evocative craftsmanship (a tax which her readers must share in some expense of attention and patience) to discover and establish the essential unity underlying the apparent contradictions of a complex, hypersensitive and thwarted nature. But if at first *Douglas* appears to be a chaos of centrifugal impulses (and, more humanly speaking, rather an unsatisfactory small boy), our understanding of him advances with his own self-realisation; and as he emerges from the dim light of the museum which is the symbolic scene of his childhood into the brief radiance of his so tragically terminated days with *Laurel*, he acquires both solidity and a firmer hold upon our sympathy.

Middle-Aged Heroine

One of the smaller sorrows of the war is the fact that many pleasant things associated with Germany have lost their power to charm. For instance, few of us now could read again *Elizabeth and Her German Garden* or *The Benefactress* without a useless pang of longing for the happy international conditions of their period. Luckily, if we must avoid ELIZABETH's earlier books, her latest, *Mr. Skeffington* (HEINEMANN, 9/-), has nothing in it of Germany save a

chapter darkened by the German treatment of the Jews, which has its effect on the life of the heroine. That heroine, *Fanny*, wakes up one day to find that illness and fifty years between them have stolen the beauty which was her *raison d'être*. One by one she encounters her old worshippers, and finds that they are no longer under her spell, and the reader trembles for the charming creature's future. But ELIZABETH, perhaps not so light-hearted as of old, but as wise as ever, and with as keen an eye for character, kindly provides her with a future that will do much more than copy fair her past; and we, her latest admirers, are satisfied.

Conjecture

In taking the case of *Lizzie Borden* (HUTCHINSON, 8/3) as the subject of her latest book, Mrs. BELLOC LOWNDES gives a probing study of the woman whose name, after nearly fifty years, is remembered in America. Miss BORDEN was acquitted when tried for the murder of her father and step-mother, but Mrs. LOWNDES is convinced that she was guilty, and in this volume can be found explanations for the sudden transformation of a respected and respectable member of society into a determined and brutal murderess. "I am convinced," Mrs. LOWNDES writes, "that the passion of love played a predominating part in the tragedy;" but even if we do not agree with all of her conclusions we can still appreciate the skill with which the story of this unhappy girl is told.



"He says it's the one place he feels really at home."

Minerals

MR. E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM, in *The Strangers' Gate* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 8/3), has imagined one of those small kingdoms in Central Europe, of which the stock, as far as our novelists are concerned, seems to be quite inexhaustible. Orlac's king was a wastrel, her ministers were corrupt, and her finances depended almost solely upon a wonderful mine, which was owned by the Anglo-Orlacian Trust Company. The President of this undertaking was a stern but fascinating Englishman, whose way was not made easier by the dirty work of an exceptionally disagreeable German, and by the fact that he had fallen in love with a beautiful Orlacian maiden. The supremely critical incident, during which the President when faced by death was saved by his lady-love, is not entirely credible, but the story as a whole goes with such a swing that criticism is stifled.

The Lighter Brigade

"53,800 CIGARETTES CHARGE"—Heading in *Daily Paper*.

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